DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 666 FL 021 175

TITLE	Teaching Culture in the Immersion Classroom. Teacher's Activity Manual.
INSTITUTION	Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD. Office of Instruction and Program Development.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	91
NOTE	71p.; For other manuals in this series, see FL 021 166-176.
AVAILABLE FROM	Foreign Language Coordinator, Division of Academic Skills, Montgomery County Public Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850 ($25 for manual and videotape; $30, non-U.S.; prepaid).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051) -- Audiovisual/Non-Print Materials (100)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Education; Elementary Education; *FLES; French; *Immersion Programs; *Language Teachers; Second Language Instruction; Spanish; Teaching Guides; Videotape Recordings

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this manual, which accompanies a video program, is to provide general background information for foreign language teachers who are, or soon will be, teaching in total, partial, or two-way immersion classrooms. Part of a series of video programs, this manual highlights special considerations for immersion teachers about deciding what culture is, when it should be taught, and how to teach it. The program is divided into three sections that discuss the following: defining culture; identifying reasons to teach culture; and developing a plan for teaching culture. This teacher's manual and the accompanying video may be used in a variety of ways. The viewer may first wish to read the information in the section "Background Reading," and then view the video program and complete the seven related activities included in the manual, or the viewer may wish to first watch the video, read the articles, and complete the activities in the manual. (VWL)

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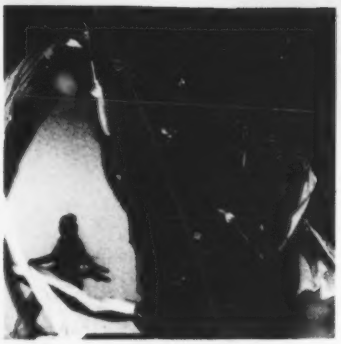
TEACHING CULTURE IN THE IMMERSION CLASSROOM



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Division of Academic Skills
Office of Instruction and Program Development
Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville, Maryland

1991

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TEACHING CULTURE IN THE IMMERSION CLASSROOM

TEACHER'S ACTIVITY MANUAL

Montgomery County Public Schools
Office of Instruction and Program Development
Division of Academic Skills
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland, 20850-1747

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The contents of the video program and manual were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department and readers should not assume endorsement of the content by the federal government.

Photograph by William E. Mills

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PREFACE

Video production

The production of this video program and manual was funded by a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI, International Research and Studies: Improving Foreign Language Methodology Through Immersion Teacher Training. This grant was developed and implemented by the Office for Instruction and Program Development, Division of Academic Skills, Foreign Languages, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland, from July,1989, to June, 1991. The activities for this grant were carried out by Eileen Lorenz, immersion resource teacher, and Myriam Met, foreign language coordinator.

The production of this program would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of the elementary immersion staff and students of the three Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) immersion Programs: Oak View, Rock Creek Forest, and Rolling Terrace elementary schools. MCPS television staff members also made significant contributions.

Upon request, this manual and video program will be distributed to school districts and institutions of higher education to be used for nonprofit training workshops and research projects. Requests for these materials should be accompanied by a $25 check ($30 for international orders) made payable to Montgomery County Public Schools. Requests should be addressed to:

Foreign Language Coordinator
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the video program and manual

The purpose of the program and manual is to provide general background information for foreign language teachers who are, or will soon be, teaching in total, partial, or two-way immersion classrooms. The ninth in a series of video programs Teaching Culture in the Immersion Classroom highlights special considerations for immersion teachers about deciding what culture is, when it should be taught, and how to teach it. The program is divided into three sections that discuss:

- Defining culture
- Identifying reasons to teach culture
- Developing a plan for teaching culture

How to use the video program and manual

The Teacher's Activity Manual and the video have been designed to complement one another and may be used in a variety of ways. The viewer may first wish to read the article found in the section, "Background Reading," and then view the video program and complete the related activities in the manual. Or, the viewer may wish first to watch the video, read the articles, and then complete the activities in the manual.

The video and accompanying activity manual may be used effectively by either one teacher or by a group of teachers. Multiple viewings to review specific sections of the video provide opportunities to use the program to support a variety of objectives. Two different lessons that illustrate the integration of culture in the immersion classroom are presented. Viewing these lessons several times is highly recommended to reinforce the different approaches to teaching culture.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Previewing Activity

Before viewing the video program, reflect on how you define culture. Formulating this definition is a first step toward identifying what culture should be taught when in an elementary foreign language immersion classroom. Note your definition below and keep it in mind as you view the video program.

I. Define culture

II. If possible, compare your definition of culture with that of an immersion colleague. On what points do you agree and disagree?

III. After you've seen the video program, review your definition of culture and decide if you wish to change or add to it. If you make revisions in your definition, discuss the new definition with a colleague.

ACTIVITY 2

Defining Culture

There are many definitions of culture and perhaps just as numerous are the models that categorize the components of culture. These models have been developed to help foreign language teachers identify, organize, and decide which elements of culture to teach. As you review your definition of culture you will find it useful to consult the models for teaching summarized by Pesola in the Background Reading Section.

I. In the Background Reading section, Setting Goals for Teaching Culture in the Immersion Program, Pesola describes five models for teaching culture. Review each model and note on the next page the key points of each one. Compare each model with your definition of culture and note similarities and differences below. After reviewing each of these models, decide if you wish to incorporate any portions of them in your definition of culture.

ACTIVITY 2

Defining Culture

	KEY POINTS	COMPARISONS WITH YOUR DEFINITION OF CULTURE
Seelye Goals		
Lafayette Goals		
Australian Language levels		
Universal of Culture (Cleaveland, Craven & Danfelser)		
Indiana Guide to Proficiency-Based Instruction in Modern Foreign Language - Contexts for culture learning		
Viewer's definition of culture		

ACTIVITY 2

Defining Culture

II. Under your definition of culture, list specific topics or concepts that you think are an integral part of it. Review the models in the Background Reading again to see if there are additional topics that you would like to include. If possible, discuss your list with an immersion colleague.

Activity 3

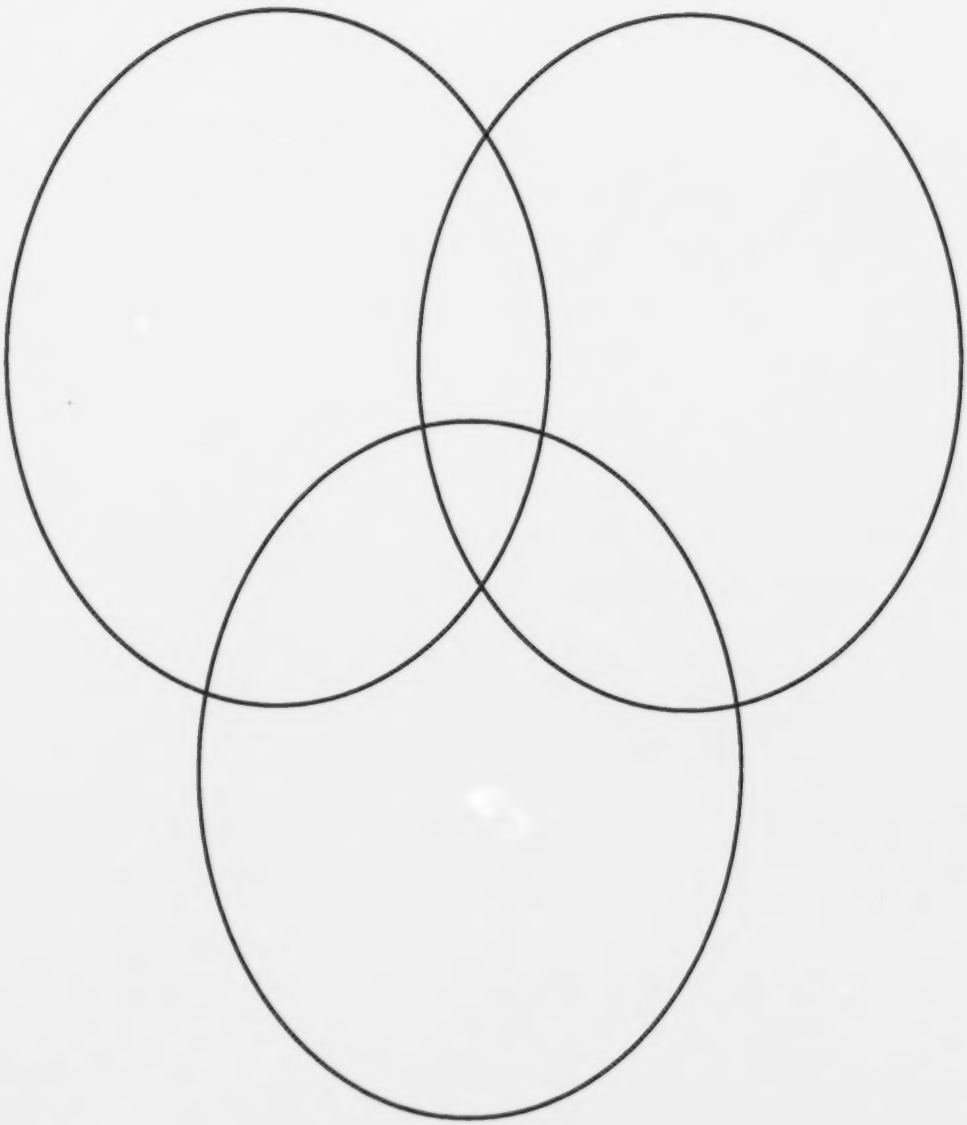
Organizing Culture to Teach

Once you have arrived at a definition of culture, a plan to organize the many components of culture will help you integrate culture into your classroom lessons more easily. Review your definition of culture from Activity 2 and consider how you might organize the topics and concepts you have identified in support of your definition.

I. In the Background Reading, in discussing of the usefulness of thematic units in teaching culture, Pesola suggests using *practices*, *products,* and *symbols* as one way to organize culture. She provides a list of examples for each of the three categories. Review your definition of culture and your detailed list of topics. Using the three interlocking circles below, classify your topics according to cultural practices, cultural products, and cultural symbols. Topics that you feel may be categorized as both products and symbols should be noted in the intersection of these two circles. For example, currency, which Pesola classifies as a cultural product, also might be considered a cultural symbol. Any topics that you feel can be categorized as a product, a symbol, and a practice should be noted in the intersection of all three circles.

Activity 3

Organizing Culture to Teach



Activity 3

Organizing Culture to Teach

II. Pesola's suggestion to use cultural practices, products, and symbols as organization for culture is only one approach. Think of other organizational frameworks that also might meet your needs as an elementary foreign language immersion teacher. Note your ideas below and discuss them with an immersion colleague.

Activity 4

Why Teach Culture

One of the four goals of elementary foreign language immersion programs is to provide students with a better understanding of people who speak the immersion language. In the section of the Background Reading, DEVELOPMENTAL FACTORS IN THE TEACHING OF CULTURES, Pesola summarizes potential advantages from "...significant experiences with foreign cultures in the immersion classroom, accompanied by opportunities for personal contact by means of letter, project, and media exchanges..." as having the following potential benefits:

1. Enhanced awareness of listener needs in communication (Genesee et al 1975).
2. Identification of others' similarities to self because of sharing a common language (Genesee 1987).
3. Greater affinity for speakers of the other language (Riestra and Johnson 1964).
4. Addition of roles and customs from the foreign culture to the child's schemata, thus extending the potential for role-taking behavior (Sparkman 1966).
5. Enhancement of reciprocity and positive attitudes toward other countries through intensive, positive experiences with the role-taking implicit in communicative, culture-based foreign language instruction.

Elementary school age students are open and receptive to learning about cultural diversity. Capitalizing on their receptiveness gives you many opportunities to help students develop and refine their communication skills as well as expand other aspects of their cultural knowledge.

Activity 4

Why Teach Culture

Being aware and sensitive to the five potential benefits to students promoted by the teaching of culture may help you develop activities that integrate culture with the curriculum in the immersion classroom.

I. The first potential benefit to teaching culture cited by Pesola is: Enhanced awareness of listener needs in communication (Genesee et al 1975). For example, a Grade 5 math objective states that students will become familiar with metric system units of measure. Pairs of students can be given sets of drawings of objects that have been measured in centimeters. Separated by their notebooks, or some other barrier, the students' task is to describe the objects by measuring the dimensions and the shapes of the objects and to decide, without naming the objects, which ones are the same on both papers. This activity may be preceded by a discussion about the use of the metric system in immersion language cultures. The objects that students describe could be symbols and products that are familiar to the students, some of which are unique to the immersion culture, and some to U.S. culture, and some common to both.

Note below your ideas of cultural activities integrated with a content objective that might enhance students' awareness of listener needs in communication.

Activity 4

Why Teach Culture

II. The second potential benefit that Pesola cites is: Identification of others' similarities to self because of sharing a common language (Genesee 1987). For example, Grade 2 students studying their community may compare it with a community in a country where the immersion language is spoken. With your assistance, students can identify similar and different recreational activities that are popular with children their age. They might view a film, a film strip, or exchange correspondence with students of their age.

Note below your ideas of cultural objectives integrated with content objectives that might help immersion students to identify similarities and differences between their culture and the target cultures.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Activity 4

Why Teach Culture

III. The third potential benefit that Pesola cites is: Greater affinity for speakers of the other language (Riestra and Johnson 1964). For example, a Grade 6 French immersion teacher invited several speakers from West Africa to discuss schooling, family life, and recreational activities with the class while students were studying Africa. A pen pal or telecommunications project, or video exchange, would also support this goal.

Make a list below of ideas how you might plan to give students the opportunity to have direct or indirect contact with speakers of the immersion language.

DIRECT CONTACT	INDIRECT CONTACT

Activity 4

Why Teach Culture

IV. The fourth potential benefit that Pesola cites is: Addition of roles and customs from the foreign culture to the child's schemata, thus extending the potential for role-taking behavior (Sparkman 1966). For example, while studying the four food groups, a Grade 1 Spanish immersion teacher and her students discussed foods commonly eaten in both the United States and Argentina. To reinforce both the science and culture objectives, the students worked together preparing menus from both countries and organized a corner of their classroom as a restaurant where they were able to order a balanced meal in the U.S. or Argentina. As a culminating activity, they prepared and tasted foods from each of the four food groups that children their age in Argentina would eat. Students were encouraged to express their likes and dislikes as well as reasons for their preferences.

List below your ideas for activities that integrate cultural objectives with content objectives that might help students learn about and experience roles and customs from target cultures.

CONTENT OBJECTIVE	CULTURAL OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY

Activity 4

Why Teach Culture

V. The fifth potential benefit that Pesola cites is: Enhancement of reciprocity and positive attitudes toward other countries through intensive, positive experiences with role-taking implicit in communicative, culture-based foreign language instruction. For example, Grade 2 students learn about community workers that serve group and personal needs in their own community. Learning about community workers in a town or village where the immersion language is spoken might involve students in role-playing activities.

List below your ideas about how to integrate cultural objectives and curriculum objectives that may enhance students' reciprocity and positive attitudes toward individuals in other countries where the immersion language is spoken.

CONTENT OBJECTIVE **CULTURAL OBJECTIVE** **ACTIVITY**

Activity 5

Develop a Plan for Teaching Culture

Teaching culture takes careful planning and thoughtful consideration to integrate it into the other components of the elementary school curriculum. The school day is filled with many curricular requirements that must be taught during a limited amount of time. It is for this very reason that we suggest an approach to teaching culture that encourages you to look for as many ways as possible to teach culture at the same time as you are teaching reading and language arts, math, science, and/or social studies.

You might use a four-step process as you plan for the teaching of culture:

Step 1. Consult your local school district's culture scope and sequence; if one does not exist, make a list of cultural objectives, or cultural knowledge, you believe students at your grade level should learn.

Step 2. Compare the cultural objectives identified (by you or your school district's culture scope and sequence) with all the content areas in the curriculum that you teach--reading and language arts, science, social studies, and/or math. Identify areas of the curriculum that mesh with cultural objectives identified in Step 1. For example, Grade 3 students learning and practicing telling time in math, also could learn to understand and tell time using the 24-hour clock as a cultural objective.

Step 3. Review the cultural objectives identified during Step 1. Identify those objectives that do not mesh with content areas in the curriculum you teach. Decide which are the most important for students of your grade level to learn. For example, by Grade 3 students enrolled in an immersion program should be able to name and locate on a map or globe countries where the immersion language is spoken.

Activity 5

Develop a Plan for Teaching Culture

Step 3. (cont.) You might think of cultural objectives that do not mesh easily with the curriculum, but that you have highlighted as <u>important</u> for student to know as "add-on" cultural objectives. This is because you will have to decide where, during your busy day, you can "add" them into the classroom routine. You probably will find that some of the objectives on your list may have to be left for another grade level.

Step 4. Develop detailed lesson plans for integrating content and cultural objectives that mesh well together.

Let's examine each of these steps more closely.

In Step 1, you need to find out if your local school district has an immersion language culture scope and sequence. Is there an articulated document that outlines what cultural objectives are to be taught and at which grade levels? For example, if you are a teacher in a Spanish immersion program, one of the first questions raised when discussing what culture to teach when, is, "Whose culture?" There are numerous choices from the many Spanish-speaking countries. A local school district's articulated scope and sequence would identify which cultures from which of the Spanish-speaking countries would be taught, and at which grade levels. Such a scope and sequence would ensure a balanced picture with information and examples from a variety of cultures. It would remove the danger of a haphazard approach to teaching culture--that students might study the same topics, focusing on the same countries and same cultural objectives year after year from Kindergarten through Grade 6. A local school district culture scope and sequence is a useful

tool for many reasons, and if one does not exist you may want to suggest one be developed.

In Step 2, review your curriculum objectives for the entire year. Of course, these should include all subjects that you teach--science, math, social studies, and reading and/or language arts. Identify areas in the curriculum where cultural objectives from your list may be taught easily in conjunction with a content objective. For example, Grade 2 students in a Japanese immersion program might begin to learn to use the abacus as an alternative way to understand place value. Use of the abacus could be extended to other math objectives, such as addition and/or subtraction operations. Grade 1 students in French immersion learning about different types of shelters during social studies lessons could learn about shelters in several French-speaking countries. In essence, you will be looking for places to infuse or mesh cultural objectives with content objectives.

In Step 3, after you have finished identifying where cultural and content objectives may be combined, there probably are culture topics you would like to teach that would be difficult to integrate with the curriculum. You will need to decide which of these are most important. The ones that you feel must be taught at your grade level, will become the "add-ons." You will have to decide how many you will teach, when, and how to teach them. Some topics will have to be eliminated altogether simply because there will not be enough time or it will not be practical to try to teach everything; e.g., history of the target country culture's famous people.

Activity 5

Develop a Plan for Teaching Culture

Once you have selected the "add-on" topics, ask yourself when and how these topics might be integrated into the classroom routine or daily schedule. For example, if you are the teacher of an upper-grade class who believes that students should discuss current events from countries that speak the immersion language, you might set up a system where one student is required to share a current event item with the class at a designated time each day (or each week).

Finally in Step 4 you will develop detailed lesson plans for each of the areas identified for integrating content and cultural objectives.

I. During Step 1 of developing a plan for teaching culture, review and discuss with a colleague your local school district's culture scope and sequence. If this document does not exist, then your first step is to brainstorm a list of cultural knowledge that you believe students at your grade level should learn during the year. Think about questions such as:

   - What cultural knowledge will be meaningful to, and appropriate for, my grade level students?
   - In the event that my grade level students have the opportunity to interact with native speakers of the immersion language, what cultural knowledge do I feel is important?

For this activity you probably will want to review your definition of culture and list of specific topics that you developed for previous activities.

Activity 5

Develop a Plan for Teaching Culture

While making your list, don't let detailed questions, such as "How will I teach this?" hinder you. This list of cultural knowledge is just the first step in the planning process. Once your list is completed, it may include very general topics such as literature; as well as very specific topics, such as culturally appropriate greeting and leave-taking customs exemplified by students using a handshake at the beginning and the end of each day.

GRADE _____ CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN

II. During Step 2 of developing a plan for teaching culture, match cultural objectives with complementary content objectives. Use the planning sheet on the following page to compare the cultural objectives identified (by you or your school district's culture scope and sequence) with one or more content areas in the curriculum that you teach--reading and language arts, science, social studies, and/or math. Identify areas of the curriculum that mesh with cultural objectives identified in Step 1 by drawing lines between cultural and content objectives that may complement one another.

Activity 5

Develop a Plan for Teaching Culture

STEP 2 PLANNING SHEET

Grade level

Cultural knowledge

II. **CONTENT OBJECTIVE** **CULTURAL OBJECTIVE**

Activity 5

Develop a Plan for Teaching Culture

III. During Step 3 of developing a plan for teaching culture, review the cultural objectives you identified during Step 1. Highlight those objectives that do not mesh well with content areas in the curriculum you teach. These are the "add-on" cultural objectives. Now you must develop a plan for how many, and when you will integrate teaching these "add-on" cultural objectives into your classroom schedule. Note below the cultural topics that you have selected as "add-on" items, as well as how you plan to teach each one.

CULTURAL TOPIC	PLAN FOR TEACHING

Activity 5

Develop a Plan for Teaching Culture

IV. Refer to your list developed on the Step 2 Planning Sheet for this activity, and select one cultural topic that may be taught easily with a content objective from the curriculum. Using the attached sheet, develop a detailed lesson plan for teaching the content and cultural objective simultaneously.

INTEGRATING CULTURE AND CONTENT

PLANNING SHEET

CONTENT OBJECTIVES

CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

Content-obligatory language

Content-compatible language

Activities

Activity 6

Thematic Units

As with any other area of the curriculum, developing meaningful, age-appropriate activities while you teach culture to your students is of prime importance. In Background Reading, Pesola discusses the usefulness of thematic units in the immersion classroom.

On the following page you will find a description of two lessons taken from a thematic unit planned by a veteran immersion teacher. These Grade 1 lessons integrate content and cultural objectives, and include age-appropriate activities that are related directly to the math, science, and reading curricula.

THEMATIC UNITS

A thematic unit relates and organizes the majority of, and sometimes all, classroom activities for all curricular areas around a central topic. The central theme of the unit described below is the coquí, a small tree frog found almost exclusively in Puerto Rico.

The veteran immersion teacher identified the following cultural objectives for this unit. Students will:

- *recognize the coquí as an important symbol of the island of Puerto Rico*
- *be able to retell a Puerto Rican legend about how the coquí got its name*
- *locate four cities in Puerto Rico on a map and name one important fact about each city*

Introductory activities for this unit were conducted during reading and language arts and science classes. Students listened to and discussed several legends read aloud by the teacher about how the coquí got its name*. In science class, students learned about the coquí's habitat and its food chain.

* Cuentos favorits de Puerto Rico by David García. Illustrated by Gus Anavitate. Puerto Rico Almanacs, Inc., Santurce, Puerto Rico

Activity 6

Thematic Units

The detailed description of the lessons focused on the integration of cultural objectives with the following math objectives:

> *Students will measure and record lengths using non-standard units and single-unit repetition with concrete models.*
>
> *Students will count by tens to one hundred.*

During math class, students had previously learned to estimate the length of an object, and then to measure its actual length using such non-standard units as paper clips, unsharpened pencils, and paper patterns of their feet.

Day 1

During the math lesson, the teacher reviewed measurement of length with non-standard units, and counting by tens to one hundred. Next, she introduced the island of Puerto Rico to the class. After quickly surveying students' background knowledge about Puerto Rico, the teacher helped students locate Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico on a map. Using a large floor map of Puerto Rico, the teacher explained to students that the walk-on floor map represented a larger model of the island.

Next, the teacher reviewed what the students already had learned about the coquí during reading and language arts and science--its name, its nocturnal habits, its food chain, and its habitat. In order to set the stage for the math activity, she told the students a story about a coquí, which the students named Pepito. This story is found below.

PEPITO

Pepito the coquí lived in San Juan and loved very much to be with his family and friends. They would gather together and sing all night long to their hearts' content. (The teacher imitated the song of the coquí, previously learned by the students, and the class chimed in spontaneously.) One day, while the coquí was

sleeping, two very noisy parrots woke him up. They were telling each other about the exciting places they had visited on the island of Puerto Rico. They talked about the cities of San Juan, Fajardo, Arecibo, Luquillo. (The teacher located and labeled each city on the floor map.)

The parrots described the old city and talked about the sentry box found at the entrance of San Juan (a fortress that symbolizes the entrance into the old city). Even though Pepito lived in San Juan, he had never seen the sights described by the parrots.

The parrots described the beauty of Fajardo, the old port that still has a lighthouse (the teachers placed a plastic replica of a lighthouse at Fajardo). Pepito had never seen that.

The two parrots talked about Arecibo and the huge radar telescope that they frequently sat on. It made the scientists very angry when they did that because this is a very important telescope with which people view the sky and the stars. (The teacher placed a picture of the radar telescope on the map.) Pepito had never seen this telescope.

The two parrots sang the praises of Luquillo. Luquillo also was near their favorite spot on the whole island--el Junque. They described El Junque, the rain forest, with all of its trees and lovely rain that fell so frequently. Pepito had never seen El Junque! (The teacher placed a replica of a parrot to indicate Luquillo's proximity to El Junque, the Caribbean National Forest).

The next day, while the children of San Juan were working hard in school, Pepito dreamed that he set off on his own to visit the wonderful places that he had heard the two parrots describe. That night, when he awoke, he was very disappointed to discover that he hadn't gone anywhere at all. So what do you think he decided to do?

Activity 6

Thematic Units

(Here students were encouraged to offer their ideas, and several of them predicted that Pepito would visit some of the cities that he had heard about. This was the end of the lesson for day 1.)

Day 2

The teacher began by reviewing the story she had told the class about Pepito and the two parrots. She told the class that indeed Pepito had decided to go off and visit each of the places that the parrots had described. Using the floor map, she showed students where Pepito lived in San Juan and where the entrance to the old city was located. Giving each student 5 coquí tiles (see Appendix A), she asked them to examine the tiles and told them to imagine that each tile represented the distance Pepito could jump at one time. She asked them demonstrate how far Pepito could go in 2 jumps, 3 jumps, 4 jumps and 5 jumps. Next, she asked students to look at the distance between where Pepito lived in San Juan and the entrance to old San Juan and to estimate how many jumps it would take him to get there. The teacher recorded the students' estimates and then one student in the class placed coquí tiles on the floor map to find out how many jumps Pepito would have to make. The number of jumps was recorded next to the estimates. The teacher followed the same procedure from San Juan to Fajardo, from Fajardo to Luquillo, from Luquillo to Arecibo and from Arecibo back to San Juan.

Day 3

Several days later, the teacher followed the same procedure from Day 2 to measure distances between cities, but used tiles grouped in tens (see Appendix B) and single tiles. She also introduced several other important cities on the island of Puerto

Activity 6

Thematic Units

Rico. Once students had practiced together, she placed the floor map and the coquí tiles in a corner of the room where students could select this activity during free choice time, or when they had completed their work.

1. Effective thematic units require careful coordination of objectives and careful planning. Review the list of specific cultural topics you identified in Activity 2. Select one of these as a central topic for a thematic unit. Write at least two cultural objectives that are related to this topic and appropriate for your grade level. Identify at least two content objectives for each area of the curriculum you teach (reading and language arts, social studies, science and/or math).

CULTURAL TOPIC FOR THEMATIC UNIT CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

CONTENT OBJECTIVES

READING/LANGUAGE ARTS SOCIAL STUDIES SCIENCE MATH

Activity 6

Thematic Units

II. Plan an activity for the thematic unit based on at least one content objective and one cultural objective. You probably will want to plan the activity so that it will evolve over the time span of several days.

ACTIVITY 7

Spanish Scenario

You are about to see a lesson that integrates reading and language arts and culture in a Grade 2 Spanish partial immersion class, taped during the month of May. Most students in this class have been in the program since kindergarten.

The reading and language arts objectives are that students will:

- *understand the gist of a story read aloud to them*
- *identify the elements of the story structure (characters, setting, problems, and solutions)*
- *make predictions and give supporting evidence*
- *identify the beginning, middle, and end of the story*
- *state the moral of the story*

The cultural objectives are that students will:

- *retell a legend drawn from the target culture*
- *identify the legend as common to Spain and Ecuador*
- *locate Spain and Ecuador on a world map*

Watch this scenario several times. Think about the following questions and note your ideas on the following page. If possible, discuss your ideas with an immersion colleague.

1. What other cultural objectives could you include as part of this lesson?
2. What follow-up activities would you plan to reinforce the cultural aspects of this lesson?
3. There are many ways to integrate culture and content objectives. This teacher chose to highlight the cultural objectives at the same time she read the legend to the class. What are some additional ways to teach the culture objectives of this lesson?

ACTIVITY 7

Spanish Scenario

I. What other cultural objectives would you include as part of this lesson?

II. What follow-up activities would you plan to reinforce the cultural aspects of this lesson?

III. What are some additional ways to teach the culture objectives of this lesson?

ACTIVITY 8

French Scenario

You are about to see a lesson that integrates social studies and culture in a Grade 2 French total immersion class, taped during the month of May. Most students in this class have been in the program since kindergarten.

The social studies objectives are that students will:

- *identify characteristics of urban communities*
- *identify characteristics of urban recreational areas*

The cultural objectives are that students will:

- *identify similarities and differences between recreational areas and activities in Washington D.C. and Paris*
- *identify, describe and locate monuments and recreational areas in Paris*
- *become familiar with a simplified map of Paris*

Watch this scenario several times. Think about the following questions and note your ideas on the following page. If possible, discuss your ideas with an immersion colleague.

1. What other cultural objectives would you include as part of this lesson?
2. What follow-up activities would you plan to reinforce the cultural aspects of this lesson?
3. There are many ways to integrate culture and content objectives. This teacher chose to help students compare and contrast recreational neighborhoods in Washington D.C. and Paris. What are some additional ways to teach the culture objectives of this lesson?

ACTIVITY 8

French Scenario

I. What other cultural objectives would you include as part of this lesson?

II. What follow-up activities would you plan to reinforce the cultural aspects of this lesson?

III. What are some additional ways to teach the culture objectives of this lesson?

BACKGROUND READING

CULTURE IN THE IMMERSION CLASSROOM

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A greater understanding of other cultures is one of the expressed goals of any foreign language program. Language and culture are in close relationship: the development of language skills gives access to another culture, and culture shapes the development and use of language. While anthropologists and linguists struggle with the precise nature of the relationship, parents and children alike expect that any language classroom--and especially the immersion classroom--will provide insight, skills, and tools for understanding and functioning within another culture.

Few teachers, parents, or administrators would argue that culture is unimportant; but often we assume that because instruction takes place in another language, the cultural insight is bound to be transmitted, more or less automatically. It is certainly true that language is the "first and most important representation of culture" (Lafayette, 19), the reflection of how speakers of that language view the world. At the same time, it is the culture within which the language is spoken that determines what meanings are being exchanged. Without cultural insight and skills, even fluent speakers can seriously misinterpret the messages they hear or read, and the messages they intend to communicate can be misunderstood. In fact, the more fluently a speaker appears to deal with the language, the higher may be the expectations for appropriate cultural understanding and behavior on the part of the native speaker. Thus the graduates of an immersion program, who typically have developed strong language skills, are likely to encounter very high expectations of cultural proficiency.

The increasingly complex, global, and interdependent world of the twenty-first century will require citizens who can communicate effectively in at least one other language and who have related cultural insights, skills, and understanding. Immersion programs have the potential for preparing citizens to be functionally bicultural as well as bilingual; but in order to realize this potential, culture must be fully integrated and systematically planned for as a major focal point of the curriculum. This paper suggests reasons and strategies for designing a culture component that

encourages the acquisition of culture as well as, and together with, the acquisition of language. Such an approach to culture can avoid the superficial and sometimes stereotypical activities that have sometimes found their way into teachers' manuals because they were "cute" and easy. As children experience culture, rather than observing it as outsiders, they will begin to link their new language with its cultural meanings and establish a foundation for genuine communicative competence.

DEVELOPMENTAL FACTORS IN THE TEACHING OF CULTURE

In the immersion classroom, experiences with culture can be planned, sequenced, and guided to provide for optimal learning: learning that is both appropriate to the child's developmental level and relevant to all other aspects of the child's education. As Damen describes it (7 p. 8):

> "...the classroom context may serve as a practice stage for intercultural communication as well as language learning. This specialized context provides some distinct advantages:
>
> 1. As an artificial community, it draws a culturally protective wall around those within, bestowing less severe punishment for the commission of linguistic and cultural errors than might be met outside its walls.
> 2. The classroom community is managed, unreal, forgiving, and protective, but it is also an environment that offers unique opportunities for experimental intercultural communication. If administered well, this community can provide the first step on a long voyage of cultural discovery that will end in the world outside the classroom.

In addition to the potential advantages suggested by Damen, culture in the elementary and middle school foreign language program, when carefully planned and organized, also has the advantage of being responsive to distinctive characteristics and needs of the child.

The Child as a Concrete Learner

Children are concrete learners throughout the elementary school years. Many continue to learn best by means of concrete experiences throughout middle school as well. Direct personal experiences with culture patterns and objects related to the target culture will allow children to build concept frameworks, or schemata, that are based on these experiences. These schemata then assist them to interpret and integrate new information about the culture as they experience it in the classroom. Piaget's description of the cognitive and affective development of children stresses the idea that "children construct knowledge from their actions on the environment. Physical knowledge is constructed through actions on objects." (Wadsworth, 36)

The importance of concrete experiences is borne out by research in the social studies. Hess and Torney (18) note that early identification with one's own national community is made largely through links to concrete symbols such as a flag or important persons. Similar symbolic associations with the new culture can assist children in feeling a personal connectedness with an additional culture group. By contrast, emphasis on exotic differences between groups of people encourages the tendency to develop negative stereotypes about those perceived as different from the child's group. In social psychological research, Lambert and Klineberg (20) conclude that stereotyping may be a partial result of emphasis on unique qualities of different groups, especially differences. Teachers and programs may reduce the tendency toward negative stereotyping when they stress relationships between groups and peoples, thus helping children to identify underlying similarities in experiences and in cultural practices that may appear at first to be very different. In the immersion classroom, many of these practices and perspectives may become so familiar through actual use that they can be regarded as valid and logical alternatives from a very early age.

Role-taking: A Developmental Task of Childhood

Role-taking appears to be one of the significant developments of middle childhood, evidence of the decentering which allows the child to move away from egocentrism in both cognitive and social functioning. Muuss (23) reports that the ages of 7 to 12 appear to be one important period for the development of role-taking ability. Social reasoning and role-taking develop as a result of experiences, stimulation, and education. It is at this point in social and cognitive development that the potential for a contribution from foreign language and culture study appears to be especially valuable.

One of the typical communication tasks used as a measure of role-taking ability is described by Flavell (15). After receiving instructions in how to play a game, a child is asked to explain the game to another person, without touching the game pieces and without asking for any feedback from the listener. For half the children in the experiment, this person is clearly blindfolded, thus requiring special consideration in the explanation. The ability to adapt to the blind perspective has

been demonstrated to increase with age. This study was replicated by Genesee, et al (17), using a group of children in grades K-1-2 learning French as a second language in Canadian immersion programs, and contrasting their performance with that of monolingual English speakers. The total immersion French speakers showed the greatest sensitivity to the listeners' needs, the largest differentiation between the sighted and blindfolded conditions, followed by partial immersion French speakers and then English speakers. The researchers conclude (p. 1013) that immersion children may have been better than monolinguals to take the perspective of the listener and respond accordingly.

Piaget and Weil (29) extended the concepts of role-taking and decentering to children's attitudes toward people and things perceived as "foreign"--both foreign countries and speakers of foreign languages. They suggest that "the mastery of the concept of the homeland may be interpreted as the culmination of a gradual "decentration', ...a process of integration...applied to a succession of ever larger units." (p. 571) But this decentration can move in one of two directions: Egocentricity can reemerge as a form of sociocentricity, or it can move outward toward reciprocity. At ages 10-11, the beginnings of reciprocity can be seen. The authors (29, p. 578) issue a challenge for educators to discover how to develop in children a reciprocity in thought and action that is not so liable to constant setbacks and reemergence of egocentricity, because it is vital to the attainment of impartiality and affective understanding.

Research by Lambert and Klineberg (20) identifies the age of 10 as a critical limit for maximum openness to people who are dissimilar. Carpenter and Torney (3) discovered, through interviews with children, that their perception of differentness among countries is heavily weighted by difference in language. They suggest, therefore, that children be exposed to a second language as one path toward becoming interculturally competent. The American Association of Teachers of French (Sparkman, 32) may have identified the component of language and culture instruction which links it to both reciprocity and role-taking when they suggested that "the study of a language and its cultural environment as early enrichment experiences will stretch the schemata, i.e.,

repertory of responses, of the child, thus broadening his tolerance and understanding of other people and their cultures, as well as his own." (p. 4)

Genesee (16) reports that participation in immersion language programs in Canada is associated with perceptions of a reduction in social distance between English and French Canadians. He speculates that this may occur "because the acquisition of a second language results in perceptions of oneself as bilingual and therefore similar to others who speak the target language." (p. 105)

The introduction of significant experiences with foreign cultures in the immersion classroom, accompanied by opportunities for personal contact by means of letter, project, and media exchanges, could be expected to have impact on the development of role-taking and reciprocity in the following ways:

1. Enhanced awareness of listener needs in communication (Genesee, et al, 17)
2. Identification of others' similarities to self because of sharing a common language (Genesee 16)
3. Greater affinity for speakers of the other language (Riestra and Johnson 30)
4. Addition of roles and customs from the foreign culture to the child's schemata, thus extending the potential for role-taking behavior (Sparkman 32)
5. Enhancement of reciprocity and positive attitudes toward other countries through intensive, positive experiences with the role-taking implicit in communicative, culture-based foreign language instruction.

Stages of Educational Development in the work of Kieran Egan

The work of Canadian educator Kieran Egan (10, 12) offers insights about meaningful, developmentally appropriate approaches to learning for elementary and middle school children that have special relevance for the teaching of culture. He identifies the mythic and the romantic stages as being particularly responsive to imagination and storytelling as a framework for all learning.

MYTHIC STAGE. Children in the mythic stage (ages 4/5 to 9/10) work with intellectual tools and categories that are emotional and moral rather than rational and logical. They tend to lack developed concepts of otherness, of an autonomous, objective world. As Egan puts it (10, p. 14):

> "Learning at the mythic stage involves making sense of the unknown world without in terms of the known world within. The things children have available to learn with are those things they know best, love, hate, joy, fear, good, bad. These are the intellectual tools and conceptual categories that children can employ in making sense of the outside world."

Instruction must enable children to absorb the world into their own categories if they are to learn. Egan suggests several considerations in planning for effective learning in this stage. First, learning must take place in terms of emotion and morality, or it will have no lasting impact. Children need to know how they are to feel about what they are learning, and to interpret it in terms of broad moral categories.

Secondly, binary opposites are fundamental to children's thinking at this stage. Children think in terms of big/little, good/bad, love/hate. To be most meaningful, new information should build on the contrast of qualities or circumstances that are at opposite poles, and then elaborated toward the middle. It would be effective to teach size concepts beginning with *huge* and *tiny*, for example, and then to add less dramatic concepts like large, small, and medium.

Finally, and related to binary opposites, children learn best when they can attribute absolute meanings to characters and events. In the fairy tale, the witch is clearly wicked, the fairy godmother is good, and the prince is heroic; events such as Goldilocks' harrowing experience with bears or Red Riding Hood's close call with a wolf lead to unambiguous interpretations.

The ideal format for instruction at the mythic stage is the story form. Indeed, Egan claims that a story form is required for young children. The story must include a beginning, to set up expectation; a middle, to pose a puzzle or a problem; and an end, that satisfies expectations and resolves the problem. At the end of the story, children know how to feel about all the events that took place, because the story has emotional as well as intellectual content. Story form is a broader concept than simply telling or reading of actual stories, although these activities reflect the power of

story form, as do most types of games. Egan understands it as a principle for developing units--in fact, for organizing all instruction.

ROMANTIC STAGE. Children in the romantic stage (ages 8/9 to 14/15) have acquired rudimentary concepts of otherness, and are beginning to use the world to think with. They respond to the new threat of a separate (therefore alien) world by identifying themselves with the most powerful and transcendent elements in the real world about which they are learning.

Egan describes romantic learners this way: (10, p. 30)

> ...the student at the romantic stage may form associations with anything in the universe embodying those qualities that best transcend the challenges posed by daily living in the real world: qualities like courage, nobility, fortitude, genius, power, energy, creativity, and so on. ...The connected tasks of establishing a sense of intellectual security and a sense of identity in an alien world are successfully achieved by romantic association with the most powerful and transcendent things the student learns about.

For students to be successful learners at the romantic stage, instruction should meet several criteria.

First, because students are now fascinated by testing the limits of what can be known about the real world, they welcome an approach to what is learned through something as different as possible from their everyday experience. In teaching about culture, this suggests that the exotic is not necessarily alienating, if other factors are in place. They can best make connection to what is being learned by means of association with a transcendent human quality, such as courage, endurance, or loyalty. Thus, a focus on heroes is especially valuable, and through their learning students want to feel what it was like to be that person, in that particular setting.

Secondly, students at this stage also have a desire to learn in great detail about things that especially interest them. This suggests the possibility, in culture instruction, of students amassing enormous amounts of information relating to aspects of the foreign culture about which they have personal curiosity. Thus they can become experts both about the information they have found and about the process of locating and organizing cultural information.

Finally, story form continues to be an important method for organizing learning at the romantic stage. In a romantic story there must be a hero or heroine for the learner to identify with, one who

struggles with and overcomes significant and often exotic obstacles from the real world. These stories allow the reader to identify themselves with noble and powerful forces that can succeed against a threatening world. While the romantic story form may be somewhat more sophisticated than the stark opposites of the mythic stage, it still incorporates sharp beginnings and endings, dramatic conflict, the drama of setting up and then resolving an expectation, and clear-cut, unambiguous meaning (Egan 10, p. 35, 38).

Setting Goals for Teaching Culture in the Immersion Program

One of the most important aspects of incorporating culture in the immersion classroom is that it be a carefully planned, integral component of the curriculum. When we do not plan for the teaching of culture, we may be taking some risks. First, it may be that culture is edged out completely, under pressure from all the priorities that must be explicitly planned for: presentation of the entire curriculum of the school district, systematic language development, multicultural education, prevention education for substance abuse--the list is lengthy for any elementary or middle school curriculum. Further, it may be that whatever cultural information is transmitted in an unplanned fashion provides an unbalanced or unintended message. Thus, it is of paramount importance that planning begin with setting goals for culture.

In setting the goals and establishing the framework for teaching culture in a specific program, it is useful to examine those goals and frameworks already developed for a variety of settings. Teachers and planners must apply their understanding of the needs, the developmental characteristics, and the intellectual tools of children in selecting goals and strategies that will be most effective in their own instructional setting. The following goals statements and organizing frameworks are offered as useful starting points, as resources for development of a local set of goals that will reflect the priorities and the potential of the local school and community setting.

Seven Goals

Ned Seelye, in his 1984 book Teaching Culture[1], suggests the following broad goals for culture instruction. Although his goals are offered with the secondary school and college setting in mind,

they have applicability for any type of foreign language program. It is particularly evident in these goals that Seelye believes language and culture to be closely linked and interactive.

Cultural Goal 1: The Sense, or Functionality, of Culturally Conditioned Behavior

The student should demonstrate an understanding that people act the way they do because they are using options the society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs.

Cultural Goal 2: Interaction of Language and Social Variables

The student should demonstrate an understanding that such social variables as age, sex, social class, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave.

Cultural Goal 3: Conventional Behavior in Common Situations

The student should indicate an understanding of the role convention plays in shaping behavior by demonstrating how people act in common mundane and crisis situations in the target culture.

Cultural Goal 4: Cultural Connotations of Words and Phrases

The student should indicate an awareness that culturally conditioned images are associated with even the most common target words and phrases.

Cultural Goal 5: Evaluating Statements about a Society

The student should demonstrate the ability to evaluate the relative strength of a generality concerning the target culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating the statement.

Cultural Goal 6: Researching Another Culture

The student should show that she or he has developed the skills needed to locate and organize information about the target culture from the library, the mass media, people, and personal observation.

Cultural Goal 7: Attitudes toward Other Cultures

The student should demonstrate intellectual curiosity about the target culture and empathy toward its people.

Curtain and Pesola (6) provide examples of how these goals may suggest activities or concepts to be incorporated in lessons with elementary school children:

Cultural Goal 1:

When talking with one another, speakers of many Latin American countries stand much closer to one another than is common in the United States.

Cultural Goal 3:

Individuals in many European countries habitually shake hands when they meet one another on the street, even if they are pausing only briefly. In Japan a bow is a part of every greeting, and in South America a greeting is often accompanied by an abrazo, a hug.

Cultural Goal 6:

When children begin to ask questions about the target culture that the teacher cannot immediately answer, or that the teacher knows are researchable, they can be encouraged to seek the help of library resources or of willing native speakers who represent the target culture. Children often have questions about house pets, school schedules, allowances, and common aspects of daily life.

Lafayette Goals

Lafayette (19) lists a number of goals intended primarily for traditional language programs and somewhat older students. Many of his suggestions, however, are applicable and useful for elementary school programs.

The student will be able to:

1. Recognize/explain major geographical monuments.
2. Recognize/explain major historical events.
3. Recognize/explain major institutions (administrative, political, religious, educational, etc.)
4. Recognize/explain major "artistic" monuments (architecture, arts, literature).
5. Recognize/explain "active" everyday cultural patterns (eating, shopping, greeting people, etc.)
6. Recognize/explain "passive" everyday cultural patterns (social stratification, marriage, work, etc.)
7. Act appropriately in common everyday situations.
8. Use appropriate common gestures.
9. Value different peoples and societies.
10. Recognize/explain culture of target language-related ethnic groups in the United States.
11. Recognize/explain culture of non-European peoples speaking target language (Canada, Africa, South America, etc.).
12. Evaluate validity of statements about culture.
13. Develop skills needed to locate and organize information about culture.

Goals from Australian Language Levels

Foreign language learning in Australia has many parallels with the American context. Learners tend to be isolated from frequent contact with speakers of the target language, and physical isolation from other nations encourages a belief that knowledge of English alone is adequate preparation for life. The results of a major national reexamination of foreign language learning in Australia were published in 1988 as the Australian Language Levels. The following suggestions are offered for sociocultural goals (Scarino, 31, p. 29-30):

> Broad goal statement: Learners will develop an understanding of the culture of the target language community, which they can use as a basis for informed

comparison with other cultures. Through this process learners will develop an appreciation of the validity of different ways of perceiving and encoding experience and of organising interpersonal relations, and reach a more secure acceptance of their own personal identity and value.
Through the sociocultural goals learners should gain the following insights about the target language community:

- o an understanding of how interpersonal relations are conducted
- o an understanding of the everyday life patterns of their contemporary age-group (including life at home, at school, and at leisure)
- o some insight into its cultural traditions
- o some knowledge of its historical roots and its relationship to other communities
- o some knowledge of its economy and the world of work
- o an understanding of its political and social institutions
- o an understanding of its cultural achievements
- o some knowledge of its current affairs

It is hoped that these goals will enable learners to understand more about the target language culture, to develop positive attitudes towards it, and take advantage of opportunities offered for personal involvement.

Universals of Culture

An emphasis on similarities and universals underlying perceived differences in cultures is a recurring theme in discussions of culture learning. One useful listing of such universals is found in work by Cleaveland, Craven, and Danfelser (4).

I. Materials Culture
   A. Food
   B. Clothing and Adornment of the Body
   C. Tools and Weapons
   D. Housing and Shelter
   E. Transportation
   F. Personal Possessions
   G. Household Articles

II. The Arts, Play, and Recreation
   A. Forms of the Arts, Play, and Recreation
   B. Folk Arts and Fine Arts
   C. Standards of Beauty and Taste

III. Language and Nonverbal Communication
   A. Nonverbal Communication
   B. Language

IV. Social Organization
   A. Societies
   B. Families
   C. Kinship Systems

V. Social Control
   A. Systems and Governmental Institutions
   B. Rewards and Punishments

VI. Conflict and Warfare
   A. Kinds of Conflict
   B. Kinds of Warfare

VII. Economic Organization
   A. Systems of Trade and Exchange
   B. Producing and Manufacturing
   C. Property
   D. Division of Labor
   E. Standard of Living

VIII. Education
   A. Information Education
   B. Formal Education

IX. World View
   A. Belief Systems
   B. Religion

Indiana Guide to Proficiency-Based Instruction in Modern Foreign Languages

Foreign language teachers in Indiana, under the leadership of Strasheim and Bartz (33), developed a state curriculum guide in which the priorities of language proficiency and culture learning are thoroughly integrated at every level. The contexts for culture learning that serve as the framework for the guide are the following (p. 43):

The "World" of the Target Language
Leisure Time
Family and Home
School and Education
Travel/Transportation
Meeting Personal Needs
World of Work
History and Politics
Fine Arts

Culture learning as a process

Perhaps one of the most important things we can teach our students about other cultures is that they should become good observers who are slow to make judgments. Lange and Crawford-Lange (5) emphasize the importance of process in culture instruction, of helping students learn to interact with culture. They urge the development of a process that will do the following:

1. Make the learning of culture a requirement.
2. Integrate language learning and culture learning.
3. Allow for the identification of a spectrum of proficiency levels.
4. Address the affective as well as the cognitive domains.
5. Consider culture as a changing variable rather than a static entity.
6. Provide students with the skills to re-form perceptions of culture.
7. Provide students with the ability to interact successfully in novel cultural situations.
8. Exemplify that participants in the culture are the authors of the culture.
9. Relate to the native culture.
10. Relieve the teacher of the burden of being the cultural authority. (p.146)

Culture and the Curriculum in the Immersion Classroom

Whatever goals may be chosen for culture in the immersion program, its role will be most effective if it becomes a key component of an integrated learning environment that responds to the interests, needs, and developmental level of children. That is, culture should be emphasized but not isolated, incorporated and not compartmentalized. In the integrated learning environment, culture will interact with language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, and all other areas of the curriculum, as children use language to make connections among the many facets of their world.

Role of the Thematic Unit

One of the most useful tools for planning instruction in the immersion classroom is the thematic unit. As Pappas, Kiefer and Levstik describe it (26), the thematic unit provides "a framework for a community of learners in which all children can continue to learn language and to construct knowledge (p.49)."

In constructing a thematic unit the teacher, in collaboration with students whenever possible, chooses a topic or theme that can draw on elements from many areas of the curriculum. For example, a unit based on the theme "Trees" might include, depending on the age of the students, such elements as the following: various uses for trees (for building, as homes for animals, sources of foods, as fuel); types of trees in different climates; role of trees in the ecosystem; books, stories, poems and songs about trees; determining the age of a tree based on its rings; placing historical events according to a tree's rings; role of trees in myth and legend; classification of types of leaves from trees; enemies and hazards faced by trees in various settings; holidays that feature or incorporate trees; methods of self-propagation used by trees; survey of trees chosen by homeowners in the immediate surroundings. Goals and activities from across the curriculum are incorporated into the thematic framework, rather than appearing as compartmentalized content areas without clear connection with one another. This structure encourages natural language use to express ideas and feelings and, as Pappas, Kiefer and Levstik point out (26), takes advantage of differing backgrounds and learning styles brought by the students in the class. The thematic unit

appears to provide the ideal vehicle for linking language, culture, and the content curriculum in the immersion classroom.

When information or experiences from the target culture can themselves be the central focus of a thematic unit, the likelihood is increased that language will be acquired with the cultural associations that give the language substance. For example, a unit built on the theme of "Holidays" could give opportunity for children to experience activities associated with celebrations throughout the year in the target culture, to connect them with historical and regional information, and to relate them to similar and contrasting celebrations in their own culture.

Regardless of the starting point for a thematic unit, information and experiences from the target culture can always be represented, and should be a factor for inclusion that carries the same status as such content areas as language arts, science, and social studies. Examples from the target culture can be a part of basic instruction in all the content areas, as the child uses cultural ideas and examples to think with and to learn from.

When considering what one might draw into a thematic unit, it might be useful to think of cultural elements for the immersion classroom in terms of cultural products, cultural symbols, and cultural practices. Some examples follow:

Cultural Symbols:

Flags, insignia related to children's interests

Significant national or geographic monuments

Symbols associated with holidays

Good and bad luck symbols

Symbolic meaning of animals

Heroes from history or myth

Cultural Products:

Significant examples of the visual arts (and artists)

Significant examples of the musical arts (and composers)

Important characters, events and themes from folk literature

Traditional children's songs, rhymes, games

Traditional stories and legends

Examples of folk arts

Currency and coins, stamps, and other realia

Traditional and holiday foods

Cultural Practices

Forms of greeting

Celebration of holidays

Use of gestures

Meals and eating practices

Shopping

Favorite playtime and recreational activities

Home and school life

Patterns of politeness

Types of and attitudes towards pets

How children and families move from place to place

As an additional application of culture to all types of thematic units, visual materials from the target culture can help to illustrate the differences in range of concepts between one language and another. A good resource for these visuals is current magazines from countries in which the language is used. The teacher can seek out "typical" examples of the a concept--woman, bread, house, street--and use them to illustrate new vocabulary or associations. Or students can be asked to collect images and share them with one another through collages or scrapbooks illustrating ideas they are learning. Lafayette (19) suggests introducing new vocabulary in culture-related clusters, such as what people in the target culture eat at different meals (p. 57).

Literature-based Language Arts

Literature-based language arts in the target language can give access to the children's literature of the target culture, and in this way to the cultural heritage of childhood shared by all members of the target culture. Among the most useful tools available to the teacher for this purpose are the folk literature and contemporary children's literature of countries whose language is being taught. The use of culturally-based literature has several advantages. First, it allows children to experience elements of the culture, rather than being told about them. Second, it can serve as the foundation for a literature-based, thematic, whole-language curriculum. Third, it is responsive to the optimal mode of learning in both the mythic and the romantic stages of learning described by Egan (10).

Folktales are particularly interesting in terms of the language in which they are presented. As Bosma explains (2), "The beauty and richness of language found in authentic written versions of the folktales contributes to children's language development... The magic of words grows in the child who listens to stories. Even before children can produce the words, as listeners they can sense the music of language (page 1)." The simple narrative, predictable narrative patterns, and extensive use of dialogue help children to interpret the imagery. In addition, many words, phrases, and events from the folk tales of a language community are found in contemporary language use.

Folktales have the additional advantage of combining culturally specific information with human universals. Folk literature describes solutions to universal human needs and challenges as experienced within a specific cultural context. Characters are drawn clearly and generally stand as symbols of compelling and contrasting abstract ideas, such as good and evil, wisdom or foolishness. As Egan (10) points out, the young child especially will respond to and learn best from this combination of story form, binary oppositions, (personified) absolute meanings, and emotional and moral categories. Further, even as children encounter contrasting cultural information, they can identify the universal human needs and values underlying the action in the stories, thus reducing the perceived threat of difference.

Since folktales come from the oral tradition of a culture, they are ideal for story telling, one of the most powerful tools for surrounding the the young learner with language. In story telling, the emphasis is on communication with the immediate audience, and the teller adapts and elaborates

until the meaning is clear. As teachers progress from story telling to story reading, to eventual reading of stories by the children themselves, the consistent story framework and the use of binary opposites and absolute meanings can make it possible for children to offer successful predictions of what a story will be about or what will happen next, a useful thinking skill.

Contemporary children's literature offer the advantage of reflecting current issues and surroundings encountered by children in countries in which the target language is spoken. Children can identify with the emotions and the moral challenges faced by characters in the stories that they read, recognizing universals in their new cultural setting.

In the case of both folktales and contemporary literature, culturally appropriate illustrations can add a significant dimension to the cultural learning that is possible, as well as enhancing understanding of the stories themselves. Many children's books contain illustrations of real artistic merit, and in some cases they incorporate considerable culturally interesting detail. The illustrations can also serve as models for children's own artistic response to what they have heard or read for themselves.

Social Studies and Culture

In many ways the social studies seem a natural choice for integration with culture in the immersion classroom. Geography can gain meaning when it is used to discover and explain the similarities and differences between life at home and life in settings where the target language is spoken. A thematic unit might center on a geographic concept, for example, such as the "Cities" concept often taught in grade three. Over time, the unit might incorporate such cultural information and activities as the following:

Activities

o Take imaginary residence in a section of an important city from the target culture, exploring it in the imagination in parallel with explorations of the local environment or a nearby well known city.

o Construct or examine maps of a well-known city and the city in the target culture.

o Locate, chart, and interpret demographic information about the local city and the target city

o Create a salt map of the target city incorporating the major geographic features and landmarks

o Develop a bazaar or market featuring products of the target city, paid for by real or replicated currency and coins from the target culture

o Create fantasy or imaginary retelling of legends or events that reflect the history of the target city

o Write a new legend about how the target city was saved from a modern threat, perhaps by the children of the city

Cultural Symbols

o Identify important monuments in the target city that would be well known to children in that culture and creating imaginary visits or stories about them

o Read about important historical or legendary heroes important to the target city

o Create banners or other items for display reflecting symbols used to represent the target city

Cultural Products

o Examine and imitate traditional folk arts from the city

o Read folk literature or contemporary literature for children in which the target city or an unspecified city reflecting the target culture plays an important role

o Become familiar with the work of an artist identified with the target city, perhaps imitating it and placing it on display in a classroom museum named for an actual location in the target city

Cultural Practices

o Celebrate a holiday important in the target city, preferably one that is not celebrated locally, or at least not celebrated in the same way

o Plan an imaginary shopping trip to buy food needed for meals for a single day.

o Share a class eating experience based on meal or snacking practices of the target city.

o Use a city transportation map to plan a visit to an important monument or a recreational destination such as a zoo, a beach, or a park

While the above suggestions certainly do not exhaust the possibilities for cultural components in a thematic unit centered on the topic of "City," they should demonstrate the range of content areas and activities that can be drawn from the target culture.

Among the many other dimensions of the social studies, history may have the strongest natural connection to the culture component of the curriculum. Egan is not alone in emphasizing the importance of the story in learning. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Task Force on Early Childhood/Elementary Social Studies encourages the use of biography and historical fiction as a means for awakening student interest and enthusiasm for history (24, p. 19).

The story of a single character experiencing a dramatic event in the history of the target culture can introduce either a thematic unit or an in-depth study of a period in history that reaches well beyond the borders of the original setting. That story can be told and elaborated in such a way as to touch on all elements of the curriculum and to include significant information about and emotional understanding of the target culture itself. For example, a story about a young person immigrating to the United States from 19th-century Europe could reveal the conditions that led to leaving a beloved home culture, the elements of culture considered important enough to carry along on an arduous trip, conditions of transportation, contributions of the culture to the development of the United States, value placed on family and family structure. As the study progresses, students can be using the target language to react to events from the point of view of the main character or from that of other characters in the narrative.

Helping students to relive important events through the lives and stories of individuals is a way of addressing another important goal of the both the social studies and global education: the ability to take on a variety of perspectives.

Global and Multicultural Education

The across-the-curriculum goals of global education and multicultural awareness are closely related to, and largely satisfied through, the skillful development of cultural goals in the immersion classroom. Global education cannot be considered a substitute for teaching the culture of societies in which the target language is spoken. Rather, successful acquisition of the target culture can serve

as a kind of beachhead for perspective-taking that cannot be achieved through global education alone. The child who has comfortable access to the resources of two cultures will be in a much better position to value and enjoy the challenges and opportunities of a world of diversity. Choice of cultural information and resources included in this discussion can help to reinforce the connectedess of humans throughout the world, through shared activities and concerns.

Mathematics and Science

Clearly, mathematics and science will be represented in any well-designed thematic unit. Even though ties between these content areas and culture are not so well established, the teacher can make many connections in day-to-day planning. Some examples follow:

- o Link the use of metric measurements to the target culture, and illustrate with advertisements and food labels on which the metric measurements are displayed.
- o Use brain teasers and puzzles from children's magazines in the target culture.
- o Use foods and objects reflecting the target culture for measurement and weighing activities.
- o Classify and graph the occurrence of various animals, trees, and plants as they are encountered in children's literature or other reading about the target culture.
- o Record and compare temperature and climate conditions in the target culture and locally

<u>Cultural Symbols</u>

- o Choose animals with cultural meaning as a focus for the study of ecological relationships and life cycles.
- o Introduce scientific or mathematical discoveries, where appropriate, by means of stories about historical figures from the target culture with whom they are associated.
- o Examine superstitions and myths from the target culture in relationship t .he scientific or mathematical information with which they can be connected.
- o Choose plants that carry some cultural meaning for activities in which children plant seeds and watch their growth

<u>Cultural Products</u>

- o Choose situations and characters from target culture folklore as the basis for problem-solving activities
- o Use coins or other realia from the target culture as counters and markers for mathematics activities and games.
- o Cook foods from the target culture using metric measurements, where appropriate, for practice in measuring and weighing
- o Apply the concepts of shapes and symmetry to the folk arts and other visual arts from the target culture. Create patterns using traditional themes, colors, and shapes from the target culture.
- o Use products from the target culture for estimation activities relating to length, capacity, and volume
- o Use common objects from the target culture for examples and activities relating to properties of matter

Cultural Practices

- o Choose educational board and card games from the target culture to reinforce thinking skills and mathematical concepts
- o Use catalogs from the target culture for problem-solving mathematics activities involving budgeting and shopping.
- o Use formal schedules (school, transportation, holiday events) from the target culture as the basis for time-telling activities and practice in personal planning

Art and Music in the Classroom

Information from the target culture can serve as a significant component of both art and music instruction, from the earliest years of the immersion program. These activities in the fine arts can provide students with access to another shared dimension of human culture and activity. Suggestions for strategies include the following:

ART ACTIVITIES:

o Study the paintings or other creations of a specific artist or even a period of art from the target culture as the focus of a thematic unit.

o Hang good quality prints of work by artists from the target culture in a prominent place in the classroom, changing them regularly and using them as a focal point for discussion, or to illustrate concepts and ideas.

o Replicate authentic crafts from the target culture in classroom art activities.

o Use art prints for sorting and classification activities, and as visuals for exemplifying concepts to be taught.

MUSIC ACTIVITIES:

o Sing characteristic nursery, folk, and play-time songs from the target culture. Songs accompanying dramatic play or songs that tell a story are especially appropriate and useful for extended activities.

o Expose students to typical instruments used by children or families in the target culture, especially folk and rhythm instruments. Encourage interested children to learn to play instruments, as appropriate.

o Incorporate typical rhythms from the target culture in the development of chants and rhymes reinforcing new vocabulary and concepts.

o Have children make typical rhythm instruments from the target culture, if appropriate. Use student-made rhythm instruments or those obtained from the music department or other sources to develop accompaniments for class singing activities.

o Play music from the target culture as background music during independent study activities or to set the stage for storytelling or dramatic play.

Impact of Culture as a Curricular Goal

Acquiring the culture of a group means more than simply mastering the appropriate gestures and social forms required in the new setting, more than being able to describe practices and relationships of daily life or the significant symbols and monuments of a people--although it also means all of these. It is even more than being able to function within the group without making serious gaffes.

It means being able to take on the perspective of an individual from that culture and understand the actions of others and of oneself in terms of that perspective.

Experiences in which children imaginatively reenact specific events, and especially individual "stories" carefully chosen from life in the target culture, can help them to understand what it means to live within that culture and react to it. Fantasy experiences (Pesola, 28, Curtain and Pesola, 6), simulations, skits, and plays can help to achieve what Degenhardt and McKay call "imaginative reenactment" (8). For example, a group might read a culture-based story about a birthday celebration, choose roles, act out a similar celebration, and then write a response to the experience based on the roles they have played--perhaps thank-you notes, diary entries, or letters to a friend in which they describe their feelings about the experience.

Other, reality-based experiences with culture may be especially appropriate for children in Egan's romantic stage. Cross-cultural classroom exchanges, as described by Curtain and Pesola (6) and Pesola (28) bring opportunities for genuine communication, potential exploration in detail of the lives of those living in the target culture, and possibilities for comparison and identification of universals and similarities. Children at this age might benefit especially from classroom visits by community members who grew up in the target culture. These visitors might share their personal stories and provide role models for both language and behavior.

The acquisition of culture will be most likely to achieve its full impact when children are guided in the process of stepping back from what they have learned and reflecting on it. This may take place when they make explicit comparison between the cultural experiences they have encountered in the classroom and similar or contrasting patterns from their own culture, or when they are made conscious of having taken on a new perspective. Some tools for achieving this awareness include creative dramatizations that allow children to take on differing perspectives; writing experiences in which children take on specified cultural roles; or experiences that build classroom relationships with children from another culture.

Implications for the Immersion Teacher

For many teachers the creation of such a rich and varied cultural context may seem both unrealistic and unattainable. Even native speakers of the target language often lack the personal background and resources necessary to develop a broad, child-appropriate culture curriculum, and teachers who acquired their language as students have usually had little direct exposure to the child's world of the target culture. As a result, teachers may be nervous and hesitant about teaching culture, just as any teacher might be uneasy about teaching a subject without in-depth knowledge or training. The natural consequence of this uneasiness is for the teacher to grant the "uncomfortable" subject a somewhat lower priority and thus avoid dealing with it.

As is the case in many areas of the curriculum, one effective way for teachers to deal with culture is to consider themselves co-learners and co-inquirers with the children, encouraging questions and working together with the class in locating answers. In planning curriculum, the teacher can also consult native speakers on the staff or in the community, resources from nearby colleges, and especially exchange students in the local school system. Other possible sources of cultural background and information include the following:

- o Subscriptions to children's magazines from the target culture, for use in the library and in curriculum planning.
- o Subscriptions to newspapers and magazines for teacher use, especially periodicals intended for parents and caregivers.
- o Children's literature from the target culture, in the target language and in translation.
- o Collections of folk and fairy tales, in the target language or in translation
- o Collections of games from the target culture, or sections about the target culture in collections of games from around the world.
- o Contacts with elementary school teachers in the target culture, for purposes of exchanging teaching materials, sharing up-to-date information about important children's literature, and providing specific information about children and their daily lives.
- o Cooperative efforts with foreign language teachers in the same school and in other school systems to create a body of useful cultural background from which all teachers can draw.

CONCLUSION

Because language and culture are so closely related, the degree of culture acquisition achieved in an immersion program will be dependent in large part on the level of language skills and communicative ability students are able to achieve. Children in immersion programs should be able to reach a high level of both language proficiency and cultural perspective. One important task of the immersion program is to engage children with the culture, help them develop new perspectives through culture-based experiences, rather than simply tell them about culture. The challenge offered in this paper is for teachers to reach beyond the superficial, beneath the surface representations of culture into the deeper understandings and shared experiences that truly shape the world of a speaker of the language. The immersion classroom provides the ideal setting for these experiences to take place.

In all cases, without the opportunity to experience culture identification, language acquisition itself is limited by the immediate classroom environment. Immersion classrooms can realize their potential for intercultural communication only if, from the beginning, languages are acquired in a setting that provides carefully developed cultural contexts. Collaboration and strong commitment on the part of immersion teachers and the support of the foreign language professional community can led to increasing success for efforts to achieve both language and cultural goals in immersion programs.

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[1]Teacing Culture, by Ned Seelye, is recommended primary reading by any teacher.

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